

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-25

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DRAFTED BY DOD/OASD/ISA:BGLOBDELL;EUR/CE:BAFLATIN

APPROVED BY EUR:WSTABLER

EUR/CE:SGEORGE

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DOD/DASD:HEBERGOLD, JR.

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY VIENNA PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY BERN

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR MASS AU

SUBJECT: BLECHA'S DISCUSSION AT PENTAGON CONCERNING
AUSTRIA'S AIR DEFENSE

REF: TELECON OF 9 APRIL 1974 BETWEEN COL. TROY, DATT, AND
BG LOBDELL, OASD/ISA; VIENNA 3220

1. MR. KARL BLECHA VISITED GEN. LOBDELL ON MARCH 29,
1974, ACCOMPANIED BY MR. GERHARD WEIS, AUSTRIAN RADIO AND
TV. BLECHA WAS INTERESTED PRINCIPALLY IN DISCUSSING AIR
DEFENSE OF AUSTRIAN TERRITORY. GEN. LOBDELL SAID THAT
FROM A PERSONAL POINT OF VIEW THERE APPEARED TO BE THREE
POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES FOR THE AUSTRIANS:

A. DO NOTHING. THIS ALTERNATIVE PERMITTED OTHER
NATIONS TO VIOLATE FREELY AUSTRIAN AIRSPACE AND
SOVEREIGNTY.

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B. ATTEMPT TO AMEND THE 1955 TREATY TO PERMIT AUSTRIA TO BUY GROUND-TO-AIR MISSILES FOR AIR DEFENSE. THIS OPTION, ALTHOUGH AVAILABLE, WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE DIFFICULT TO WORK POLITICALLY.

C. PROVIDE AN AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM OF SOME DESCRIPTION. LOBDELL STATED THAT A SYSTEM WOULD REQUIRE TWO ELEMENTS, A GROUND-BASED RADAR SYSTEM AND AN

AIRCRAFT OF SOME KIND. BLECHA COMMENTED ON THE EXISTING AUSTRIAN RADAR CAPABILITY, POINTING OUT THAT IT COULD SEE NORTH AS FAR AS THE BALTIC AND THAT IT HAD GAPS LOOKING SOUTH ACROSS THE ALPS. BLECHA SAID THAT AUSTRIA WAS TRYING TO CORRECT THIS DEFICIENCY. LOBDELL AND BLECHA DISCUSSED THE ELEMENTS OF AN AIR FORCE ORGANIZATION (SQUADRON OR WING) AND FACTORS WHICH WOULD INFLUENCE ITS COMPOSITION. AUSTRIA WOULD HAVE TO DETERMINE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCH AN AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM, FOR EXAMPLE: (1) WHETHER AIRCRAFT SHOULD BE AIRBORNE AT ALL TIMES, (2) WHETHER A QUICK REACTION ALERT WAS REQUIRED, (3) THE AMOUNT OF AIRBORNE TRAINING REQUIRED. THE REQUIREMENTS WOULD NECESSARILY SIZE THE FORCE AND AFFECT ITS COMPOSITION. LOBDELL SUGGESTED THAT AMERICAN AIRCRAFT COMPANIES WITH SUITABLE AIRPLANES COULD ADVISE ON THE COMPOSITION OF AN AIR DEFENSE UNIT ONCE AUSTRIA HAD IDENTIFIED REQUIREMENTS.

2. A NUMBER OF TIMES DURING THE CONVERSATION LOBDELL TOLD BLECHA THAT IT WAS AN AUSTRIAN DECISION AS TO WHETHER OR NOT IT SHOULD PROTECT ITS OWN AIRSPACE. THE DISCUSSION WAS A HYPOTHETICAL ONE IN WHICH IT WAS MADE CLEAR TO BLECHA THAT AUSTRIA ALONE MUST WEIGH THE COSTS OF AN AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM AGAINST THE POLITICAL COSTS OF NOT CONTROLLING ITS AIRSPACE. LOBDELL DID NOT PRESUME TO TELL BLECHA HOW AUSTRIA SHOULD STRUCTURE ITS DEFENSES. HOWEVER, SPEAKING ON A PERSONAL BASIS, LOBDELL SAID THAT PRESERVATION OF AUSTRIAN NEUTRALITY COULD PERHAPS BE IMPROVED BY AN AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM OF SOME TYPE. SUCH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A SYSTEM COULD ADD TO A FEELING OF SECURITY ON THE PART OF THE POPULATION.

3. BLECHA AND LOBDELL DISCUSSED THE DIFFICULTY OF HIGH-SPEED AIR OPERATIONS IN A SMALL COUNTRY LIKE AUSTRIA. AFTER BLECHA REMARKED THAT NATO PLANES SOMETIMES FLEW OVER AUSTRIA, LOBDELL COMMENTED JOKINGLY THAT HE HOPED AUSTRIA WOULD NOT SHOOT AT THEM. HOWEVER, AT NO TIME

DID LOBDELL SAY THAT BORDER VIOLATIONS WERE INEVITABLE.
LOBDELL DID NOT BRING UP THE SUBJECT OF INTERFERENCE
WITH CIVIL AVIATION AIRWAYS, NOR THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO
CONTROL OF AUSTRIAN AIRSPACE.

4. DURING AN APRIL 1 CONVERSATION IN EUR/CE, BLECHA
DESCRIBED AUSTRIA'S NEED FOR A "POLICE FORCE IN THE AIR,"
AND INDICATED THAT THE F-5E HAD NOT YET OVERCOME THE
COMPETITION OF OTHER POSSIBLE AIRCRAFT, SUCH AS THE

SWEDISH DRAGEN.

5. THE EMBASSY SHOULD NOT VOLUNTEER ANY RESPONSE TO
QUERIES OR PRESS COMMENT ABOUT THIS MATTER. IF ASKED,
HOWEVER, THE EMBASSY SHOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT THE USG
REGARDS SUCH DEFENSE QUESTIONS AS MATTERS SOLELY FOR
DECISION BY THE GOVERNMENT OF AUSTRIA. KISSINGER

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